REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the following remarks.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's courtesy of sending a copy of the 1449 form filed on July 2, 2007, in which all references are marked as considered. Applicants respectfully request that the 1449 form filed on November 29, 2005 also be initialed. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of that 1449 form is attached herewith.

Non-elected claims 1-11 and 13-23 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 12 has been amended to recite steps of measuring and comparing the signal transduction activities of samples including particular protein or a salt thereof with and without a test compound and identifying the test compound, as supported by the specification at page 10, lines 18-26, page 16, lines 14-17, and page 57, lines 10-21.

Claim 24, which includes steps of measuring and comparing binding activities and identifying the test compound, has been added as supported by the specification at page 10, lines 18-26, page 16, lines 14-17, page 56, lines 10-20, and page 57, lines 10-21.

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 12 requires steps of measuring and comparing signal transduction activities, as the brain/nerve cell protective action, between samples including protein SEQ ID NO:2 or protein having amino acid numbers 1- 70 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a salt thereof with and without a test compound and identifying the test compound that inhibits the signal transduction activity.

In addition, claim 24 requires steps of measuring and comparing binding activity between protein SEQ ID NO:2 or a particular part of SEQ ID NO:2 or a salt thereof and a

protein SEQ ID NO:8 using samples with and without a test compound and identifying the test compound that inhibits the binding activity.

Accordingly, the steps in claims 12 and 24 and the protein used for these claims are defined sufficiently, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as not complying with the enablement requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 12 requires steps of measuring and comparing signal transduction activities between samples including protein SEQ ID NO:2 or protein having amino acid numbers 1- 70 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a salt thereof with and without a test compound and identifying the test compound that inhibits the signal transduction activity as discussed above.

In addition, as discussed above, claim 24 requires steps of measuring and comparing binding activity between protein SEQ ID NO:2 or a particular part of protein SEQ ID NO:2 or a salt thereof and a protein SEQ ID NO:8 using samples with and without a test compound and identifying the test compound that inhibits the binding activity.

The methods to measure the signal transduction activity and the receptor binding activity are well known in the art (see page 57, line 22 – page 58, line 24 of the specification). Applicants submit that the scope of the methods and steps of claims 12 and 24 are reasonable in view of the teaching of the specification.

The rejection also seems to question whether substances having neuroprotective activity could be screened. However, example 2 of the specification shows that cerebral infarction is suppressed by suppressing the function of MIP-3α (see page 104, line 28 – page 105, line 31). This example shows that the present invention is applicable for screening test compounds having a neuroprotective action.

Accordingly, those skilled in the art are able to practice the methods of claims 12 and 24 without undue experimentation, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Application Number 10/547532
Response to the Office Action dated February 11, 2009

In view of the above, Applicants request reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 11, 2009

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